

Congress of the United States
House of Representatives
Washington, DC 20515-2600

March 24, 2014

The Honorable Gina McCarthy
Administrator
U.S. Environmental Protection Agency
1200 Pennsylvania Ave Northwest
Washington, D.C 20460

Dear Administrator McCarthy:

I am writing to express my strong concerns at the Environmental Protection Agency's heavy-handed approach to enforcement against the City of Great Falls, Montana, which have resulted in the City's recent decision to enter into a Consent Decree with the agency as the only way to avoid a threatened enforcement action in the U.S. District Court. Early in the history of events leading to the Consent Decree, the city reached out to the agency proactively and in good faith to ensure that its wastewater system was in compliance with the *Clean Water Act*, and its request for help was rejected because the agency personnel whose help was desired had other priorities. While I share your support for safeguarding clean water, I am disappointed that the EPA did not pursue a cooperative resolution with the city but instead utilized adversarial recourses.

As you know, several years ago the City of Great Falls began seeing problems with hydrogen sulfide gases in their wastewater system. I understand that the City Public Works Department in turn came to the EPA to seek advice on how to identify and treat the problem. The city now feels grossly mistreated because its inquiry served as a "self-incrimination" act that led to a notice of a *Clean Water Act* violation. The city strongly contends that it never intentionally violated the law and wanted to work with the EPA to satisfy the law's requirements. The EPA's response to these well-intentioned efforts therefore strikes me as needlessly punitive and counterproductive to the goal of encouraging local communities to work with the EPA to protect the environment.

As Montana's voice in the House of Representatives, I am requesting a meeting with EPA personnel to discuss the concerns put forward by the City of Great Falls and to determine the reasons for the agency's actions in this matter. My scheduler, Jesika Whittle, will be promptly in touch with your staff to ensure that the meeting occurs in the near future. Thank you for your timely attention to this request.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Steve Daines", followed by a large, stylized flourish or checkmark.

STEVE DAINES
Member of Congress (MT-At Large)